C.5

Property Of
Sierra Historic Sites Assoc.
Library

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Volume IV - Number 1 January, 1964

MEMORIES OF SUGAR PINE

by A. L. PEIME

1913-1914 - Raymond & The Wagon Era

For many years all freight to Sugar Pine was carried to Raymond by trains. There it was unloaded and placed on horse-drawn freight wagons, thence transported to Sugar Pine over rough dirt roads. This freight consisted of all varieties of edibles (including carloads of flour, beans and sugar), machinery and railroad and logging equipment.

The wagons, drawn by six, eight and ten-animal teams, required five days to make the round trip from Raymond to Sugar Pine, three up and two down. Stops were made at Coarse Gold, Fresno Flats (now Oakhurst) and the mill. On the down trip the overnight stop was usually at Coarse Gold, arriving at Raymond in time to load for the next trip. A large barn and corral were maintained in Raymond for the stock.

In 1914 I was employed by the company to handle the freighting from Raymond to Sugar Pine. At that time, two ten-animal teams were used, one owned by Sugar Pine and the other by Ed Wells, and driven by Jim Weekley and Jim Dustheimer. These were called long-line teams and were composed of two wheelers, two pointers, two swing, two eights and two in the lead. A well-trained leader was handled by a single jerk line and guided to right or left by the command of "gee" and "haw". Fifth chains were connected in series from the tongue of the wagon to the double trees of the leaders. At a command and sometimes by the use of a long, black snake (switch), the team was set in motion, all pulling together. An eight-horse team was owned and driven by George Hereford, a six-animal team by John Benson and another six-animal team by John Scanlon of Salt Spring.

Two ten-animal and the eight-animal teams each pulled two wagons; the six-animal teams would pull one long wagon. The ten-animal team wagons were usually loaded to fifteen to sixteen thousand pounds and, the eight-animal team would haul about ten or eleven thousand pounds and, the six-animal teams were loaded to about seven thousand pounds. I was always amused at Jim Weekly if the load was seventy-five or a hundred pounds under, he would insist that the difference be added.

The freighting season was in a great part regulated by the weather. as, you will recall, these were all dirt roads and, if too wet, the teams would not be able to get their freight into the mill.

A special wagon bed was used to haul the thirty six-foot railroad rails and, as these rails weighed in

(Continued on Page 2)

the neighborhood of three hundred fifty pounds, it did not take many of them to make up the load of sixteen thousand pounds. The Sugar Pine team and Jim Weekley would handle all these rails, a load that Weekley thoroughly enjoyed.

I had the opportunity to handle the Sugar Pine team by myself on two occasions and, although I made it into the mill both times, I had very little to do with the success of the trips as the team knew the road so well. On the turns where it was necessary for the pointers and swing team to get over the chain in order to pull the wagons around the turns, very little driving was necessary. Thanks to a wise and faithful team, I reached Sugar Pine.

One incident of the team freighting comes to mind. A large, but delicate, band saw frame came into Raymond and I was instructed to advise the Madera office when I was ready to ship this frame into the mill and they would send a man from Madera to supervise the loading. When ready, I phoned the office and was asked if I could handle this chore. Being young and confident, I said I could and Mr. George Opie (at the Madera office) said all right but to be careful as they had had two or three similar pieces sent in and, on arrival, were found to be sprung and never did perform satisfactorily. Weekly and I loaded the frame and secured it with binding chains and protection timbers and I told Jim to check on this often during the trip. The cargo passed a very close inspection at Sugar Pine. Two days later I received a check for $50.00 for my part in the shipment which was more than one-half of my monthly wage and, at that time, not a shrunken dollar.

1915-1916 - The Truck Era

In the spring of 1915 the company decided to try trucks for the hauling job and contracted with the King's River Hume Trucking Co.

At first, three trucks came into Raymond; one five ton and two three and one-half ton Peerless chain drives. They started to haul immediately and much freight was landed at the mill, but the spring rains were late and roads became almost impassable. All the barns, sheds and outside locations were secured to store and leave the freight until such time as the roads were open. Some of the essential articles were loaded onto wagons and taken on into the mill as teams could get through the upper reaches with light loads. After the rain had ceased, the trucks began picking up the freight along the road and in a few days it was all at its destination.

In the month of July, the company decided that the freighting could be done from Madera as by this time the trucks had proven they could navigate the hill roads in shorter time. This was to prove farewell for the big teams and the beginning of the end of the railroad to Raymond as the Southern Pacific was dependent on the Sugar Pine Co. for most of their freight. This also ended my job at Raymond, but it had been a wonderful one and one-half years for me.

As I had interests in a young lady in Washington at that time, I journeyed to Seattle, spending some time and working in a planing mill that winter. In the spring, I received a letter from George Opie telling that a contract for the hauling had been entered into with Gordon and Shuman and he had recommended me to them for a driving job. I said goodbye to my lady fair and returned to Madera. Evidently Mr. Opie had given me a good recommendation as, although I had had very little driving experience, I was given a job with those two fine men - Gordon and Shuman.

As soon as weather permitted, we started hauling from Madera to Sugar Pine with three Federal solid-tire trucks. Their top speed on level ground was about eighteen miles per hour and, in the hills on steep pulls, our speed was sometimes cut to three or four miles per hour. If the roads were real bad, it might mean we would not move a mile in three or four hours after digging and putting brush under the wheels to get traction.

We would leave the old Ford garage about six in the morning and, if the roads were good, could make it into Sugar Pine by two or three in the afternoon. We did not have truck weed chains in those days and straight link chains were half-hitched around the wheels between the spokes. Many times these chains were placed on the wheels before leaving the garage and not removed until we reached good road out of Sugar Pine on our way back to Madera.

There were many amusing as well as serious happenings on the road from Madera to Sugar Pine. The drivers of the three trucks were Puss Rowe on the five ton truck and Dink Pickett and myself on the two ton trucks. As Gordon and Shuman were then the agents for the Ford cars, they put two touring cars on the road to carry the passengers with Ted Bennett and John Murphy as drivers. There was also a one ton truck with Babe Rowe as driver that hauled the baggage and, at times if the baggage became too great, Bogey Woods, who had a small truck, was called in to help.

(Continued on Page 7)

This picture shows a log entering the mill from the pond under the cleansing action of the high pressured water jets.

WILLIAM T. HENDERSON

by NATHAN C. SWEET

Recently, a Bible, daguerreotype, scrapbook and other papers of William T. Henderson were presented to the Madera County Historical Society by Mrs. A. B. Mc Gilvray and Mrs. W. K. Sturrock, daughters of John Krohn, early settler and merchant of Coarse Gold.

The daguerreotype shows him as a young man and was probably taken about the time he joined Harry Love's California Rangers. His claim of being the ranger who killed Joaquin Murieta has been handed down in the Krohn family and has never been contradicted.

Harry Love was commissioned by the California State Legislature of 1853 to raise a company of not more than twenty men to rid the state of the Joaquins who were robbing and terrorizing its citizens. Love was given three months to do the job which he claimed to have accomplished by overtaking a band of Mexicans in Cantua Canyon of the Coast mountains and killing or capturing most of them.

The Rangers were paid a substantial reward and the state was fairly free of this type of banditry for a considerable length of time.

The source of the myth surrounding this affair can be found in a 1955 publication of the University of Oklahoma Press, a new edition of The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta by John Rollin Ridge. The introduction by Joseph Henry Jackson, puts the book and myth in their proper historical background.

An account by one of the rangers can be found in the The Last of the California Rangers by Jill L. Cossley-Batt published in 1928. Howard said the head of Murieta and hand of Three-fingered Jack, removed and preserved in alcohol for purposes of identification, were exhibited by Henderson and Black in San Francisco and elsewhere.

Henderson did not leave a diary so we must depend upon the evidence in his scrapbook and miscellaneous papers for a record of his wanderings. The scrapbook was originally the recorder's book for the Telescope Mining District, Windy Canyon, Tulare County, California. The first 58 pages have been cut out and replaced by pages of the same size. According to the original title page, the book was started in 1860 by Recorder Wm.

WILLIAM T. HENDERSON
The ranger who shot Joaquin Murie

B. Lilly, Wm. T. Henderson, Deputy.

Page 60 has an original entry of a claim staked out on March 20, 1862, and filed on April 2, 1862, by W. T. Henderson, Recorder. The claim was called St. Louis North and the claimants were John A White, B. F. Whitson, A. A. Ringle, Wm. Lamotte and Wm. T. Henderson. The page following has the record of St. Louis South, the claimants being W. March, L. L. Kennedy, A. Read, J. W. Freeman and Lovely Rogers. The date was January 1, 1863, and the recorder was B. F. Whitson. These were the last entries in the original book. Mention was made in the St. Louis North filing of a claim called Christmas Gift and Christmas Spring nearby.

The earliest date in the scrapbook was 1857 which was when he delivered an address on Temperance to the Sons of Temperance in Santa Cruz.

On the "fly leaf" of his Bible, under his signature, is written Kern River, Havilah, 1868, which would indicate that he looked over that mining district.

He was in Los Angeles County in 1872 where he became interested in spiritualism. He wrote a treatise called "Principles of the Harmonial Philosophy". In the introduction he stated that it was all dictated to him by the spirit world in a series of twenty controls.

In 1875, while residing on the Merced River, he wrote on various moral and philosophical subjects which he copied into his scrapbook. In September of 1876 he indicated that he wrote from the San Joaquin River and on February 20, 1877, he wrote a long letter to his brother John from the city of Merced.

On August 15, 1877, the Fresno Expositor reported the incorporation of the Texas Flat Gold and Silver Mining Co. The directors were Thomas Stroembeck, T. G. Hogue, J. R. Nichols, S. M. Jones and W. T. Henderson. The office was at Fresno Flats. This is the first mention of Henderson in the Expositor and except for a few items, otherwise noted, the rest of our information comes from that source. Back in 1872 the Expositor had mentioned that the Texas Flat Mine was to re-open. Located two miles west of Coarse Gold Inn, the lode had helped to create the Texas Flat placer diggings which were well populated in the summer of 1851.

In 1878 the mine was being worked and the ore crushed in a horse or mule-operated device of Mexican origin called an "arrastra" which was inexpensive to build. During March, 1878, a "clean-up" of the "arrastra" was reported to have paid $11.00 per ton of ore crushed. By November the shaft had been lowered to 100 feet and a whim completed; the whim being a horse-operated hoist. The directors then decided to assess the stockholders enough to raise $2000.00 to deepen the shaft during that winter.

In December, a list of delinquent stockholders was published giving more information about the mine ownership and Henderson appears as secretary of the corporation. The additional owners were Johathan Lewis, James G. Bell, P. D. Peir, S. M. Cunningham and Don Carlos, deceased.

About a year later, November of 1879, one-half of the mine was bonded (a form of lease) to un-named San Francisco capitalists. By March, 1880, the shaft had been lowered to 180 feet below the surface. In April, 1881, they were in 60 feet on a drift at the 115 foot level and in August the shaft was again deepened.

(Continued on Page 6)

We find among Henderson's papers, evidence that he had much to do with the management of the property. An authorization is shown for him to hire work done and a statement of costs incurred.

William Melvin remembers being told in his youth that a pile of rocks on the slope across Coarse Gold Creek from the present day Gold Nugget Restaurant were all that remained of Henderson's Home.

In the first Fresno County Directory, published in 1881, Henderson is listed as a resident of Coarse Gold, occupation - mining expert. When the Potter Ridge Mining District was organized in 1879, Henderson was elected recorder, and in June, 1881, he was chairman of a miner's indignation meeting to protest the hiring of Chinese labor to dig a canal at the Enterprise Mine located near present day Ahwahnee on the Fresno River. A complete report of the meeting can be found in a newspaper clipping among his papers.

In July of 1881, he petitioned the County Supervisors for the formation of an election precinct at Coarse Gold and was on the election board that fall.

Almost immediately after choosing to make the Coarse Gold - Fresno Flat area his permanent home, he became identified with the cultural life of the community by joining the Literary Society at Fresno Flats. Here is the society's program for the first week of September, 1877: Declamation, T. J. Kirk (who was the schoolmaster); Reading, Charles Meyers; Essay, George Wood; Debate, Resolved that the teacher is more important than the preacher; Those debating for Yes, D. H. Meyers, R. T. Burford, W. T. Henderson; Those debating for No, Geo. Wood, J. M. Johnson, T. J. Kirk. The negative team won the debate.

The teams were well-balanced, R. T. Burford being an attorney and J. M. Johnson, on the other side, Justice of the Peace. Henderson was probably as well-educated as the schoolmaster, although Kirk later became a practicing attorney in Fresno.

This period of the late seventies and early eighties were exciting times in these two foothill communities, with the Yosemite stages bringing tourists daily, the sawmills creating new jobs, and mines being discovered nearby both hamlets; no one could complain of stagnation.

Quoting from Henderson's letter to his brother written in Merced, Feb. 20, 1877, we get an explanation of his move to the hills.

"I left Los Angeles last October two years ago, after disposing of all I had in that vicinity. I went to San Francisco to try to dispose of some of my mining interests east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to enable me to pay to all a visit on the centennial of our nation's existence. I conditionally made sales of some of them, but had to go out there with the parties prior to its confirmation, but before the time came to go, I was attacked with a severe paralysis of my whole left side which made me almost helpless and nearly deprived me of life. I succeeded after a time in getting up into the Sierra Nevada Mountains and (due to) the salubrious climate, bracing atmosphere, and pure water, I gradually recovered after spending the whole summer, and part of last fall. I now thank God my health has entirerecovered. I intend going into the mountains this summer to prospect for mines. I am not discouraged yet and hope to make some money this summer or at least get something that I can realize on in the future."

That he an another prospector

(Continued on Page 8, Column 1)

Puss Rowe seemed to like hauling the shipments of dynamite and the other drivers were glad someone else volunteered for that freight. One day Puss left with his load of dynamite with a number of Chinese riding on top of the load. He told them what he had on board and that there should be no smoking. They surely understood for before he reached Coarse Gold, some of the more timid men had left the truck and when he arrived at China Wells, none remained left on the load.

Dink Pickett in those days was a happy-go-lucky fellow as was Virgil Gordon. I had occasion to find both had a different nature underneath. On returning from Sugar Pine I met Dink going up and we always stopped for a few words. Once he was hauling long heavy steel and, in the hills, it persisted in slipping back on the truck and he would have to rearrange it several times. But, at one spot exceptionally steep, it slid further back than before and fell to the road. Dink was so disgusted that he did not reload it and a good part of it went into a canyon alongside the road where no doubt it still is in hiding.

Another day going into the mill, I picked up Virgil and we traveled together. When we hit the road going down into the mill, which had punching cross wise, many pieces of this punching was broken at the place where ruts would be. One wheel of my truck dropped into a hole where the puncheon was broken. I tried several times to back up or go ahead, but could not get anywhere as the wheel would spin. Virgil asked to try but without much more success. He became quite perturbed and said if he had some dynamite, he would blow the truck up. I was mighty glad at that time that Puss Rowe had volunteered to haul the dynamite, for knowing Virgil I believe he would have used it.

We were surprised at the mill one day to see Puss driving in with an unwanted passenger tied good and tight in the cab of his truck. On inquiry, he told us that he was near Bissets when he met a young Indian with too much firewater aboard and he put him out of the road several times, but he would come right back in the road, so, as a last resort, he tied him in the truck and brought him on into the mill.

When we first started to freight out of Madera, Ed Wade, an experienced mechanic, came from the William L. Hughson Co. to keep the trucks in shape. Me being a greenhorn, Ed would often ride with me. Raised in San Francisco, he knew very little about the mountains and he had heard a great deal about rattle snakes. On one of our trips he was riding in the right side of the cab and I was hugging the banks pretty close when he said, "Say, don't drive too close to the banks. I'm afraid of rattle snakes." He was afraid one would be sitting on a bank waiting to strike at him as he passed by.

Going into the mill one day, I spied Jack Murphy's Model T alongside the road. Jack told me that coming down the hill around the turn, he found he was without brakes and with a lady passenger aboard. At the bottom of the hill there was a straight stretch of road with a sharp turn at the end and quite a high hill where the turn started, but not too steep of a approach up the hill. Jack used his head very wisely and took for the bank where, a little distance up, was a barb wire fence. The car hit the fence at pretty good speed, the slack in the wire was taken up and the wire, acting as a

(Continued on Page 8, Column 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To the Membership:

As your President for the last two years, I have appreciated your splendid cooperation and interest. We have grown and are continuing to grow.

A thank you to all who have helped to gather and catalog our historical items collecting in our storage room in the Court House. Only by seeing and handling these articles does one really have a full appreciation of them.

Let's strive toward that goal of being able to some day have these items available for viewing by all of Madera County's citizens.

Thank you one and all for your continued interest.

Maud Lindemann

WILLIAM T. HENDERSON

came close to realizing his ambition is indicated by a news item of March 2, 1881, stating that they had located a mine on Deadwood Gulch near the old Walker Mine and again, on April 13th, that the ledge was eleven feet wide. This discovery was only two miles west of his Coarse Gold home.

That he had overestimated the extent of his recovery was proven by a letter written to the Expositor by John Krohn on Dec. 27, 1882, telling of his death from heart failure on Christmas evening while dressing to attend the Christmas Tree Festival at Krohn's St. Charles Hotel. The Expositor account also stated that Henderson was born in Tennessee, volunteered for the Mexican War, and had always claimed, and without contradiction, the honor of slaying the bandit chieftain Joaquin Murieta.

MEMORIES OF SUGAR PINE

spring, threw car, Jack and his passenger back in the road. As Jack was quite a story teller, I did not take his word but went to the hill. One set of tracks could be seen where he went up the hill, but none coming back down, so I knew Jack was telling the truth.

In June of 1916, which was the year Gordon and Shuman first had the contract, I received a few days off and made another trip to Seattle where Maude and I were married on June 7th. On returning to Madera, we stayed until after the Fourth of July and then went to Sugar Pine where I built a summer shack and we spent our honeymoon between Madera and Sugar Pine. In the fall we returned to Madera until the freighting season was over. We then went to Raymond where I freighted to Miami and Wawona. I then came back to Gordon & Shuman as an accountant in the Ford Garage and later, when Harvey Shuman took over the freighting to Sugar Pine, I went with him for the fall season as a mechanic.

Many of the oldtimers are gone, but a few of us hard-boiled cases still remain.

MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

Editor. . . . . .Jo Ann Badeaux
Managing
Editor . . . . . Nathan C. Sweet
Contributing
Editor . . . . . .A. L. Peime

MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN is published quarterly in January, April, July and October by the Madera County Historical Society, P. O. Box 478, Madera, California. Subscription, 50¢ per copy, $2.00 per year, is included in membership in the Society. Please credit the "Madera County Historian" when reproducing any part.